

Developed by:
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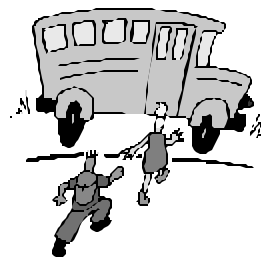
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517/483-4400
or
Recycle@lansingmi.gov



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Recycling in School



*Ten steps to a successful school
recycling program*



Virg Bernero, Mayor

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Step One—Understanding the Importance of Recycling

Each American generates an average of 4 pounds of trash per day. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, there was a total of 209.7 million tons of municipal solid waste generated in 1996. One important step we can take to reduce the amount of trash thrown away is to recycle more. Recycling:

- prevents the emission of greenhouse gases and water pollutants
- saves energy
- supplies valuable raw materials to industry
- creates jobs
- conserves resources for our children's future
- reduces the need for new landfills

A school recycling program can impart valuable hands-on experience that encourages students to make recycling a part of their lifestyle—not only at school, but also at home and in the future. Such programs can help young people become active learners and apply their classroom skills to solve real problems.

The City of Lansing's Waste Reduction Services (WRS) staff is available to assist with the various functions of a school recycling program. Many of the materials collected within a school can be placed in the green curbside recycling bins provided to the school by the Public Service Department. Each week the recycling truck will empty the bin and place it back on the curb for the next use.

WRS staff is also available to provide teachers, school administrators and students with supplemental information, training, educational activities and hands-on demonstrations.

Each school should evaluate their needs and resources before determining the type of program that suits them. This booklet was designed to provide 10 steps to get you started—when you are ready to begin a program and would like some assistance, contact WRS at 517/483-4400 or recycle@ci.lansingmi.gov for further information.



Featured School—Fairview Elementary School



Fairview school began recycling in the winter of 2002 after Iris Paul, a third grade student, became concerned about all of the trash being thrown away. Iris realized that some of the trash could be recycled.

Iris received some assistance from teachers and school administrators and WRS staff was ultimately contacted about using the city's green bin recycling program.

The school's principal, Tara Fry decided that 3 kinds of products would be recycled at Fairview:

- Newspapers
- Plastic bottles (#1 clear, #2 colored, milk jugs)
- Mixed paper, including magazines and catalogs

Tara sent a memo to school staff explaining how the program would work and asked the teachers to involve their students as much as possible.

It was decided that the bins would be placed in the gym until collection day. The students, who alternate the responsibility of setting out the green bins, place them at the curbside. The city's recycling truck stops in front of the school each week to empty the bins.

The students who participate in Fairview School's recycling program take pride in what they are doing. The actions they take reinforce an environmental ethic, which encourages similar behavior outside of school.



Step Nine—Set Overall/Individual Goals

Goals are useful for encouraging students to excel. It also keeps every one motivated. WRS recommends keeping a record of volume and/or weight of the materials collected. The coordinator or team may want to acquire a scale, how large depends on the average amount of material collected. A record could be made of how many bins are set out weekly or taken to drop-off centers by a simple checklist sheet. Students can be responsible for tracking the amount of material collected each week, month or whatever time period is decided.



Step Ten—Reward the People Responsible for the Program

Recycling helps the environment which helps everyone and it is worth the extra effort to reward those key people who made the program successful. Rewarding your team also keeps them motivated and generates more enthusiasm for the program. Consider one of the following ways to show your appreciation.

- Award Certificates of Appreciation (WRS staff can assist)
- Throw a pizza party
- Schedule a trip to the zoo
- Purchase environmentally related merchandise and make them available to everyone in the school

WRS can also provide
free recycling
presentations—
perfect for rewarding
your team!



Step Two—Select a Team Leader or Recycling Coordinator

Selecting an individual or a team to oversee the project is essential to a successful recycling program. The recycling coordinator will be responsible for the program. Their duties may consist of the following:

- Generate enthusiasm and support for the program
- Communicate any problems, needs or questions to WRS
- Educate students, teachers, school staff & parents about the program (WRS can provide assistance)
- Organize students and oversee basic operation of program
- Follow up with participants to ensure activities are completed

Step Three—Determine what materials to collect

The City of Lansing can accept the following materials for recycling:

- Mixed paper (junk mail, flyers, envelopes, office paper/letterhead, magazines, catalogs, colored paper, stationary, shredded paper, etc.)
- Newspapers
- Aluminum
- Steel/tin cans
- HDPE plastic bottles (#2)
- PET plastic bottles (#1)
- Plastic milk jugs (#2)
- Clear & brown glass bottles and jars

The coordinator should carefully examine the office, classrooms and other areas of the school where materials will be collected to determine what items are generated the most. **WRS recommends starting to collect only one or two different materials in the beginning, this simplifies the program and allows those responsible for sorting and setting out bins to get accustomed to the work load. Mixed paper and newspaper are good items to start with because this represents a large portion of most schools recyclable materials. Call WRS for assistance with this step if necessary.**

Items such as polystyrene foam, boxboard and corrugated cardboard must be taken to a drop-off center, as the City of Lansing does not collect these items through the green bin program.



Step Four — Establish System for Collecting Recyclables

To keep the program running efficiently, your collection system needs to be as simple and organized as possible. The coordinator or team should designate logical locations for collection containers within the school. Clearly label each container (newspaper only, mixed paper only, etc.)

Consider placing bins where materials will be generated (classroom, office, etc.) so that people do not have to travel far to find the correct container.

WRS can supply your school with green curbside recycling bins. Once the bins are full of materials, place them at the curbside on the designated collection day and they will be picked up weekly.

Step Five—Storage of Recyclables

The coordinator should determine where recyclables will be stored (utility room, gym, cafeteria, etc.) Ideally storage would be near the area where the materials/bins will be placed each week for pick up by the city. The space should also allow students, teachers and others in charge of sorting materials to have easy access at different times of the day.

Step Six—Preparation of Materials

The coordinator will need to determine who is responsible for collecting, sorting and placing the materials in the proper location for pickup. The materials that are collected using the green bins should be prepared according to the guidelines that the City of Lansing ordinance requires. These guidelines will be provided to the school by WRS.

WRS recommends that the people in charge of separating and organizing materials, monitor the bins daily, so that the items can be easily prepared for the collection day.



Step Seven—Educate the School about the Program

Support of the principal is critical. If necessary, security personnel should also be notified because the student volunteers will often have to walk the hallways during classes, which may require special permission. It is very important to notify the entire staff, including teachers, clerical staff, custodians, students, etc. WRS recommends that you coordinate a “kick-off” assembly, where you would invite key people from the school and review the procedures and state who the coordinator is, who to contact for questions, etc. It is a good idea to have students work on signs, posters and banners and hang them throughout the school. Below are additional suggestions on how to create awareness of your program.

- Display examples of recyclable materials in the halls, office, cafeteria and classrooms.
- Make announcements daily, weekly, monthly, etc. You may want to feature certain materials, or certain key people who have made the program successful.
- Teachers can remind students about the program and even include recycling lessons in their classes. WRS staff can also provide in-class demonstrations/activities.

Educating your school about the recycling program is an on-going job. WRS recommends you continue to educate the students and staff members about the program throughout the school year.

Step Eight—Commitment

An active student team is vital to the success of a school recycling program. Our experience with Lansing schools has taught us that a pledge board is a very effective tool in encouraging students to commit to the recycling program. Instruct the students that by signing the pledge board, they are committing to a full school year of responsibility. This makes them think about what they will have to do and how responsible they will have to be. Only allow students to sign the pledge board who have decided to make the commitment. Clarify with students that signing the pledge is a privilege which will be revoked if they abuse it. By doing this, you eliminate those students who are not interested in the program or who are not able or willing to commit their time to the program.

